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PALESTINE REFUGEE PROBLEM

Utilization of Local Leadership and Talent in the Settlement Program for Palestine Refugees

Analysis of technical aid and training assistance required for the refugees emphasizes the magnitude of the tasks involved in a settlement program for Arab refugees. The question arises as to the source of all the professional and technical personnel which will be required. Training of youth is a partial answer, but chiefly on a long-range basis. Utilization of foreign personnel is also a partial answer. It is believed, however, that there exists a third and more extensive source -- the utilization of the leadership, technical and professional skills, and other talents which should be available among the refugees themselves.

This observation is based on several years of intensive field work in rural Arab Palestine, during which a program of rural welfare or rural development was undertaken under the joint sponsorship of the Near East Foundation, the American University of Beirut, and the British Government in Palestine. The program was carried on from 1931 until 1947, and involved the training of personnel in agriculture, sanitation, village cooperatives, child care and recreation, and the launching of specific projects on these subjects in various villages.

On the basis of a review of field notes from the foregoing program, the writer is convinced that the Palestine refugees might produce a remarkably large number of skilled personnel which would be of great assistance in any settlement program. The following is a tentative list of personnel who might be available:

800 to 1,000	Qualified school teachers
100	School teachers trained in agriculture, and who were in charge of school garden projects in village communities.
50 to 100	Nurses
20 to 50	Educational inspectors and assistant inspectors
5 to 10	Supervisors of school gardens
10 to 20	Medical officers and private physicians
20 to 30	Agricultural officers
50 to 100	Administrative officers

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Many other private technicians and professionals.
Many mukhtars (village headmen) village councils and religious leaders.
A large number of college students who could play leading roles in the program.

On the basis of the writer's experience in working with many of these people in the villages of Palestine, it is believed that they are well qualified to lead and to assist in a program of refugee settlement. The problem is to locate these people and to offer them a program in which they would have confidence and in which they could work with enthusiasm.

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